ORIGINAL OPEN MEETING AGENDA ITEM



1

RORATION C

2

3

4

5

COMMISSIONERS

KRISTIN K. MAYES, Chairman, and act 12 14 46 GARY PIERCE

PAUL NEWMAN

SANDRA D. KENNEDY

BOB STUMP

Arizona Corporation Commission DOCKETED

OCT 12 2010

DOCKETED BY

DOCKET NO. E-01345A-10-0113

6

7 OF ARIZONA PUBLIC SERVICE

SUPPLY AGREEMENT 9

10

11

12 13

14

15

16

17 18

19

20 21

22

23

24

25

26

27 28

¹ Issued January 29, 2010. ² A.A.C. R14-2-1801 through 1816.

IN THE MATTER OF THE APPLICATION COMPANY FOR A SOLAR ELECTRICAL

COMMENTS

Arizona Public Service Company ("APS" or "Company") hereby files comments in response to new issues raised at the Arizona Corporation Commission's ("Commission) Open Meeting held on September 22, 2010 ("September 22nd Open Meeting"), where initial discussions regarding the Company's Application in this docket were heard. APS is also providing comments regarding Chairman Mayes' Proposed Amendment 1 ("Mayes Amendment 1").

As expressed in the September 22nd Open Meeting, APS has great concerns regarding the Commission's expressed interest in revisiting the final decision rendered on the Renewable Energy Credit ("REC") and Energy Contract Model, approved in Decision No. 71459.1 This would undermine the certainty needed to progress on renewable energy development and may have repercussions for APS and the renewable market participants beyond the scope of this project. In addition, such a policy shift would be occurring not in a proceeding directly involving the Renewable Energy Standard ("RES") Rules² or the Company's RES Implementation Plans, but rather, in the docket making a determination on the Solar Electric Supply Agreement ("Solar Agreement") with Freeport-McMoRan Bagdad Inc. ("Freeport-McMoRan").

Pursuant to Decision No. 71459, renewable projects that fall within the REC and Energy Contract Model are distributed energy ("DE") resources that count toward compliance with the DE requirements of the RES Rules.³ The renewable facilities to be constructed at the Bagdad Mine are precisely such a project. If the Commission were to prohibit the Bagdad Mine project as counting towards the RES DE requirement now, it would be reversing course on a prior Commission decision.

To alter, amend or rescind a final Commission decision requires specific legal process, and cannot be done without meeting the notice and hearing prerequisites required by Arizona Revised Statute ("A.R.S.") § 40-252. Therefore, such action would deny the parties due process in the case at hand. However, if the Commission believes modifications to this contract model should be considered in the future, the Commission has the opportunity to make such a change in APS's 2011 Implementation Plan docket,⁴ without affecting the due process rights of the interested parties. A decision rendered in this regard would apply on a prospective basis, and could not interfere with contracts entered in good faith in reliance upon Decision No. 71459.

Approval Requested: The Solar Electrical Supply Agreement

APS is seeking approval of a Solar Agreement, under which Freeport-McMoRan would pay APS a fixed rate ("Solar Energy Charge") for a period of 25 years for the renewable energy from the 15 megawatt photovoltaic ("PV") plant that will be constructed at the Bagdad Mine. The solar facility will be owned and operated by RE Bagdad Solar 1 LLC, a subsidiary of Recurrent Energy.

APS is <u>not</u> seeking approval for the project at the Bagdad Mine, or for the Purchase Power Agreement ("PPA") that was executed by Recurrent Energy and APS, because the Commission has already approved the underlying transactional approach in Decision No. 71459. In that Decision, the Commission approved the Company's 2010 Implementation

³ A.A.C. R14-2-1805.

⁴ Docket No. E-01345A-10-0166.

Plan ("2010 Plan"), which included the REC and Energy Contract Model, a described annual and lifetime budget, and the associated resultant energy.

For the Bagdad Mine project to be completed, there are multiple tasks that must be completed in parallel, such as permitting, financing and interconnection. Commission approval of the Solar Agreement is a critical component, as it is a condition to the Purchase Power Agreement and is necessary for Recurrent Energy to receive financing for the project. Significant technical challenges with interconnecting the solar system to APS's distribution system exist, and the parties are working diligently to understand and resolve the issues and mitigate any risks to reliability that could result. Because the federal cash grant-in-lieu of the investment tax credit ("Federal Grant") expires at year end, and certain construction milestones must be accomplished before then for the project to move forward, Commission approval of the Solar Agreement is needed now, so as not to jeopardize the viability of the project.

Procedural History: Approval of the REC and Energy Contract Model

A review of the procedural history leading up to the Commission's approval of the REC and Energy Contract Model provides clear evidence that projects developed under this transactional model were to be considered DE resources. Renewable energy in Arizona has grown dramatically since the Commission adopted the RES Rules in 2007. An evolving industry, emerging technologies and growing customer interest have been hallmarks of the initial years under the RES Rules.

As expected in a developing market where regulatory incentives play a key role, regulatory issues related to the interpretation and application of the RES Rules have arisen over time, and APS has been involved in many discussions with the Commission, the industry and customers regarding renewable energy. When presented with non-standard proposals or new approaches to renewable energy, APS has sought Commission guidance on how to proceed. For example, APS has requested Commission clarification on whether a biomass

thermal system was eligible for incentives;⁵ how to provide regulatory certainty related to cost recovery for long-term incentive commitments;⁶ and whether and how residential incentives should be modified to spread funds among more customers.⁷ Likewise, when it came to examining innovative renewable project transaction models for DE, APS provided guidance on the scale and direction its efforts were headed in its 2009 Implementation Plan ("2009 Plan") filing, and specifically brought its proposals to the Commission for approval in

8

7

its 2010 Plan filing.8

9 10

1112

13

14

15

16 17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

26

27

28

⁵ Docket No. E-01345A-08-0254; Decision No. 70532 (Sept. 30, 2008).

October 31, with approximately \$8 million forecasted by year end. 10

The historical context is instructive in understanding the development of the REC and

Energy Contract Model. In 2007 and 2008, compliance with the RES's aggressive DE

requirement was difficult, and there was great uncertainty regarding customers' future

interests in investing in renewable energy.⁹ Even with the Commission-approved incentive

programs, customers were still required to make a substantial personal investment to install a

renewable facility on their premises. During these years, there were millions of unspent DE

incentive funds at year end. For example, in 2008, there was a \$14 million surplus on

cost savings for the DE Program, in APS's 2008 Implementation Plan, the Company

In an effort to increase distributed resources on the APS system and provide potential

⁶ Decision No. 70654 (Dec. 18, 2008) at 9. *See also* discussion in APS's Supplemental Information to its 2009 Renewable Energy Standard Implementation Plan at 2-5, which was filed in Docket No. E-01345A-08-0331 on October 10, 2008.

⁷ Two different filings were made in Docket No. E-01345A-09-0338 regarding the residential incentives: the March 31, 2010, Application for Modification of Residential Incentives was addressed in Decision No. 71686 (April 30, 2010); the August 2, 2010, Request for Clarification and Modification of Residential Incentive was addressed in Decision No. 71913 (Sept. 28, 2010).

⁸ Docket No. E-01345A-09-0338.

⁹ As stated in APS's 2008 Implementation Plan:

Considerable public discussion has surrounded the DE targets described in the RES. This discussion has centered on questions related to the magnitude of customer interest in DE, the effect of introducing many new distributed technologies, the ability of the technology suppliers and installers to meet the potential customer demand, and ultimately, the total cost of incentives required to drive the required customer participation to meet RES compliance. The extent of customer participation is the primary driver of DE results and it is simply unknown and unknowable at this time. (Emphasis added.)

²⁰⁰⁸ Implementation Plan at 3; Docket No. E-01345A-07-0468, filed August 7, 2007.

¹⁰ See Decision No. 70654 (Dec. 18, 2008) at 9.

informed the Commission that it intended to issue an RFP for DE during the second half of 2008 ("DE RFP"). With that solicitation, APS was seeking alternatives to the standard DE model, because at that time, under the standard model, compliance with the DE requirements proved difficult to achieve. APS anticipated that one of the outcomes of the DE RFP would be DE projects that would have a lower cost than current non-residential DE incentives. This solicitation was not related to APS's utility scale plans or procurement because APS was on track for meeting the RES renewable generation requirements. The smaller projects from the DE RFP were not necessarily expected to be priced competitively with larger scale projects.

The results of the DE RFP were introduced in the Company's 2009 Plan and later discussed in detail in APS's 2010 Plan. APS had received submittals from 12 separate entities, representing 22 distinct proposals, which were principally focused on PV installations for non-residential customers. All proposals that represented a reduced cost, as compared to funding the same projects through the Company's standard renewable energy incentive program ("REIP"), were short-listed for further discussions. 12

The Commission had specifically discussed this DE transactional model in Decision No. 71459, which approved APS's 2010 Plan. Finding of Fact No. 15 states:

APS also proposes a Renewable Energy Credit ("REC") and Energy Contract Model, by which APS works with a DE developer and DE on a customer's site would be purchased by APS, and the customer would contract with APS to buy back the renewable energy.¹³

Decision No 71459 also specifically discussed the incentive budget for the projects that resulted from the DE RFP. Finding of Fact 21 states:

APS views projects resulting from the DE RFP as substantially the same as commitments under the PBI [Production Based Incentive] program. As a result, the Company has included those commitments in its calculation of lifetime PBI authorization. In 2010, the lifetime PBI authorization necessary to implement those projects and program described by this Plan totals \$570 million, with \$250

¹¹ APS 2009 Implementation Plan at 6; Docket No. E-01345A-08-0331, filed July 1, 2008.

¹² See APS 2010 Implementation Plan at 4; Docket No. E-01345A-09-0338, filed July 1, 2009.

¹³ Decision No. 71459 at 6.

million required for the DE RFP, \$100 million of the proposed increasing the lifetime PBI authorization, and the \$220 previously authorized. (*Emphasis added*.)¹⁴

The Commission's approval of the Company's 2010 Plan, including the REC and Energy Contract Model, is a final Commission decision that approved the structure under which the Bagdad Mine project was designed. It became effective in January 2010 and remains in force.

Regulatory Certainty

While constraints in financing due to the recession have affected some projects, the solar industry in Arizona continues to grow, and a multitude of diverse projects are in various stages of development. Both APS and renewable developers must have confidence that development will be supported, and regulatory certainty is the foundation to this development. While state and federal tax incentives play an important role, it is the RES incentives that are essential for the viability of most projects. Renewable projects are only built if they have a utility paying for the energy or RECs, and a utility can only afford to make those commitments if it knows the Commission supports their commitments. Because the Commission has the ultimate approval of the RES incentive programs, the customers, the utilities, and the renewable energy industry all rely considerably upon the finality of Commission decisions.

Renewable developers can invest millions of dollars in bringing a project to fruition, and the certainty that the contracts they have entered into will be honored is critical. Those contracts not only commit ratepayer funding in the present, but over the many years described within each contract. The Commission recognized the need to establish certainty over these long-term commitments and, as a result, has provided APS with lifetime authorizations for the full value of DE incentive contracts. The DE RFP projects — including the REC and Energy transactions — were authorized by the Commission under this lifetime authorization model. The reliability of the Commission decisions that approve the various types of

¹⁴ *Id.* at 7-8.

¹⁵ Decision No. 70654 at 12.

transactions is vital if the renewable energy resources envisioned under the RES Rules, as well as APS's commitments regarding renewable energy under the Company's recent settlement agreement, ¹⁶ are to be achieved.

The essential regulatory certainty is embedded in the Commission's decisions, and those decisions cannot be changed lightly. It is firmly established that the law requires adequate notice of proceedings to persons whose interests are affected thereby, and requires full opportunity to be heard. Therefore, the necessary procedural requirements set forth in A.R.S. § 40-252 must be observed before an order or decision can be rescinded, altered, or amended, which includes providing the affected corporation with notice¹⁷ and an opportunity to be heard as if on a complaint.

The Size of the Project

At the September 22nd Open Meeting, the Commission expressed concerns regarding the size of the 15 megawatt project to be constructed at the Bagdad Mine, based on the amount of non-residential DE incentive funding that would be applied toward this transaction. APS does not understand this response, because the parameters of this program, which targets large customers and provides a significant amount of non-residential DE, had been specifically discussed in the Company's prior request for Commission approval of the REC and Energy Contract Model. APS's 2010 Plan described the REC and Energy Contract Model, stating in relevant part:

¹⁶ See Decision No. 71448 (Dec. 30, 2009).

The Arizona courts have construed whether the Commission's notice complied with the procedural requirements. In *Gibbons*, the court held that "telephonic notice given in this case, at the very time the hearing was being held, is not the kind of notice contemplated by the statute since it would afford no opportunity to be heard." *Gibbons*, 95 Ariz. at 346, 390 P.2d at 584. In *Tonto Creek Estates Homeowners Ass'n v. Ariz. Corp. Comm'n*, the court opined that "[a]bsent the most extenuating circumstances, obtaining actual notice of charges while seated in the very hearing convened to decide the issues would not afford the parties a meaningful opportunity to be heard. *Tonto Creek Estates*, 177 Ariz. 49, 56, 846 P.2d 1081, 1088 (App. 1983). The courts have held that the general rules and regulations of an administrative board or commission prescribing methods of procedure have the effect of law and are binding on the Commission and must be followed by it so long as they are in force and effect. *Tucson Warehouse & Transfer Co. v. Al's Transfer*, 77 Ariz. 323, 327, 271 P.2d 477, 479-480 (1954). Therefore, the Commission would need to comply with the notice provisions in the Rules of Practice and Procedure Before the Corporation Commission, A.A.C R14-3-101 through 113.

In the REC and Energy Contract Model, APS and the DE developer enter into an agreement to meet the specific needs of large customers. Under this model, the developer would site the PV system at a customer's facility. APS would purchase all of the energy and the associated RECs generated by the system. APS and the customer would then enter into a separate contract/agreement where the customer would purchase all of the energy from the DE system. This model provides a more economic way to integrate solar power for very large energy users. APS believes that this model, while different from the standard approach where APS purchases only the RECs, qualifies in contributing to the DE target under the RES.¹⁸ (Emphasis added.)

APS's 2010 Plan was also explicit regarding the amount of energy that was anticipated under the proposed DE transactional models, stating:

APS has entered into contract negotiations with several counterparties that will provide over 130,000 MWh/yr of DE projects (when fully deployed) at a significantly reduced cost when compared to the REIP. This total quantity represents a little more than one quarter of APS's 2014 DE requirement. [19] (Emphasis added.)

Despite the reduced cost for the DE under the REC and Energy Contract Model, APS recognized the importance of maintaining the standard approach to non-residential DE. Ultimately, "APS selected only a portion of the proposed projects, first in an effort to gain additional and specific experience with these types of DE transactions, and second, in an effort to preserve opportunities for customer projects under other DE programs." (Emphasis added.)

APS had no reason to expect the Commission to react unfavorably to the size of this DE project, given the historical discussions regarding the transaction model under which it was brought. The Commission had not indicated any preference for limitations regarding project size in Decision No. 71459, and the RES Rules themselves are silent regarding the size of DE installations. In fact, the Bagdad Mine project is consistent with the definition of "Distributed Generation" under the RES Rules, as it will be sited at the customer premises

²⁶ APS 2010 Imp 27 Company's Appli

¹⁸ APS 2010 Implementation Plan at 16. The REC and Energy Contract Model was also described in the Company's Application, which accompanied the filing (see Application at 3-6).

¹⁹ APS 2010 Implementation Plan at 15.

²⁰ *Id*.

and provide electric energy to the load on that site.²¹ Further, while the size of the project is large when compared to other "more commonly sized" non-residential DE installations, the Bagdad Mine project is designed to serve less than ten percent of the customer's on-site energy consumption, which is well within the sizing construct of a DE resource.

The Bagdad Mine Project as Utility-Scale Renewable Generation

One of the questions posed at the September 22nd Open Meeting was why the Bagdad Mine project could not simply be converted to a utility-scale renewable generation project. The fact is that there are significant programmatic, procurement and economic differences between DE resources and utility-scale renewable resources.

As a DE project, the Bagdad Mine installation is an important resource to APS. However, this project is not appropriately located to serve the Company's general electric service needs as a utility-scale installation. APS would not have selected and would not remain interested in the development of the facility given the unique location and operational challenges with this project and the risks it introduces to one of the Company's largest customers, were the project not designed to serve as that customer's DE project.

Additionally, there are fundamental differences in economics of the procurement of distributed resources as compared to utility-scale renewable energy. This can be illustrated by comparing the cost of the Bagdad Mine project with the results of a recent utility-scale renewable generation RFP. The final Purchase Power Agreement for energy generated at the Bagdad Mine facility is above the maximum bid price (\$150 per megawatt hour levelized) allowed for a developer to be qualified to bid in the 2010 RFP, which was aimed at small generators with projects up to 15 megawatts ("Small Gen RFP"). APS received approximately 160 offers in response to the Small Gen RFP, with all of them below the \$150 cap. Some of the offers were significantly below that price threshold.

Unjustified Criticism Regarding Notice of Filing

At the September 22nd Open Meeting, solar industry representatives provided

^{28 21 50}

²¹ See A.A.C. R14-2-1801(E).

comments regarding APS's application in this docket, and some of them voiced concern because they had been unaware of the Solar Agreement filing, and/or of the fact that the REC and Energy Contract Model authorized this type of project as a DE resource. These criticisms are unfounded.

As discussed above, the REC and Energy Contract Model was the subject of the Company's 2010 Plan, which was filed in July 2009, and intervenors in that docket received copies of the filing. As part of APS's standard practice, APS held its annual stakeholder meetings to discuss the annual Implementation Plan filing. In August 2009, stakeholder meetings were held to discuss the 2010 Plan, with more than 100 participants in attendance. The proposed DE transactional models were a part of the discussion.

Neither is there merit to some of the industry's complaints that they were not aware of the Solar Agreement filing at the time of Open Meeting. Indeed, this application was docketed in March 2010 — six months before the matter reached Open Meeting. There were no intervenors to this docket, and no notice requirements applied.²²

Size of Freeport-McMoRan Contribution to RES

There was some discussion at the September 22nd Open Meeting as to whether Freeport-McMoRan's contribution to RES funding was reasonable in comparison to that of other customers, or in comparison to the potential economic benefits of the Solar Agreement to Freeport-McMoRan. Neither comparison is relevant to the issue presented in this docket, which is whether the Solar Agreement (and the Bagdad solar project that forms the basis for such Agreement) is in the public interest. Approval of the Solar Agreement results in the potential for 15 megawatts of solar energy (and all of the benefits of this green resource) that will not exist absent that approval. Approval of the Solar Agreement allows for reduced costs of RES compliance — reduced costs that will benefit APS customers other than Freeport-McMoRan.

²² The Commission's Rules of Practice and Procedure provide a procedure where persons who are directly and substantially affected by a proceeding may secure an order from the presiding officer to intervene in a Commission docket. A.A.C. R14-3-105. Only when a person is made a party to the proceeding does APS have an obligation under the rules to provide copies of any filed documents. A.A.C. R14-3-107.

1 Freeport-McMoRan (like all APS customers) pays the RES charge that was established 2 by the Commission. The concept of caps on the total amount that can be assessed any single 3 APS customer for the RES, and the proportional increase in such caps from time to time, 4 predates the RES and comes from the time of the Environmental Portfolio Standard ("EPS") 5 surcharge beginning in 2001, at which time the cap for large industrial customers, such as Freeport-McMoRan, was established by the Commission at \$39 per month (as compared to the residential cap which was \$0.35). The proportional increase in the RES caps was formally adopted by the Commission for APS in Decision No. 67744 (April 7, 2005) and subsequently carried over into the RES surcharge.

APS acknowledges that the RES surcharge caps could be revisited by the Commission, however, this is not the docket in which to do so. Approval of the Solar Agreement should not be delayed until such time as the Commission chooses to re-examine the amount of each customer class' contribution to overall RES funding, particularly because immediate approval is necessary to ensure the continued viability of the project.

Chairman Mayes' Proposed Amendment No. 1

On September 21, 2010, Chairman Mayes filed an amendment in this docket. There was no discussion of Mayes Amendment 1 at the September 22nd Open Meeting. Mayes Amendment 1 requires APS to: 1) notify the Commission if at any point during the lifetime of the Bagdad Mine project any other non-residential renewable DE system will be rejected by APS because APS is already in compliance with its non-residential renewable DE requirements as a result of having signed the Solar Agreement with Freeport-McMoRan; and 2) request from the Commission additional funding for the commercial systems that would otherwise be precluded.

If the objective of Mayes Amendment 1 is that the Commission be informed of the impact of this particular project, the Recommended Order in this docket already requires that the Company include specific information as part of the annual RES reporting process, including the annual kilowatt hour output of the solar facilities, the value of the costs of

7

8

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

26

comparable conventional generation, and the amount deposited into the REST fund as a result of this transaction for the relevant reporting period.²³

APS does not believe that it can move forward on this proposal if Mayes Amendment 1 is adopted. APS's Implementation Plans reflect that the Company will be exceeding compliance for non-residential DE requirements for the next several years, without specific reliance on the RECs provided by the Bagdad Mine project transaction. Should Mayes Amendment No. 1 be adopted, as APS understands the amendment, the Company would have to make such notifications and requests for each and every subsequent non-residential DE project that APS pursues or rejects. In practical application, the amendment adds unmanageable administrative burdens, but more importantly, it could be read to essentially increase the Company's non-residential DE requirement beyond what is required by the RES Rules. While the Company has made near-term commitments in its approved RES Implementation Plans to exceed the non-residential DE requirement, the Company believes that requiring APS alone to make this new level of commitment for the full duration of the RES Rules without the due process of a rulemaking would not be appropriate.

Conclusion

Based on the Company's Application, the discussion at the September 22nd Open Meeting, and the discussion set forth above, APS respectfully requests that the Commission adopt the Recommended Order, as written.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED this 12th day of October, 2010.

Deborah R. Sco

Linda J. Benally

Attorneys for Arizona Public Service Company

ORIGINAL and thirteen (13) copies of the foregoing filed this 12th day of October, 2010, with:

²³ See Recommended Order at 7 (Sept. 9, 2010).

1	Docket Control
2	ARIZONA CORPORATION COMMISSION 1200 West Washington Street
3	Phoenix, Arizona 85007
4	COPY of the foregoing mailed/delivered this 12th day of October, 2010 to:
5	
6	C. Webb Crockett Fennemore Craig, P.C.
7	3003 North Central Avenue, Suite 2600 Phoenix, Arizona 85012-2913
8	Attorney for Freeport-McMoRan Copper & Gold Inc.
9	, h
10	Strokly in Still
11	The same (state)
12	
13	
14	
15	
16	
17	
18	
19	
20	
21	
22	
23	
24	
25	

Copy of the foregoing mailed/delivered this 12th day of October, 2010, to:

Janice Alward Arizona Corporation Commission 1200 W. Washington St. Phoenix, AZ 85007

Steve Olea Arizona Corporation Commission 1200 W. Washington St. Phoenix, AZ 85007

Lyn Farmer Arizona Corporation Commission 1200 W. Washington St. Phoenix, AZ 85007

C. Webb Crockett 3003 N. Central Ave., Suite 2600 Phoenix, AZ 85012-2913